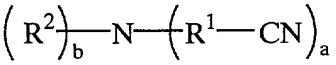
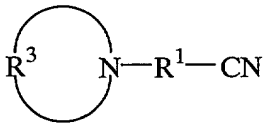
CLAIMS:

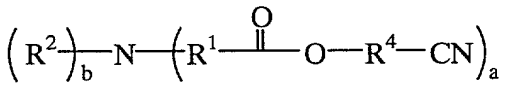
1. An amine compound of the following general formula (1), (2), (3) or (4):



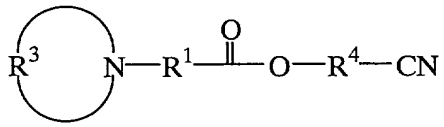
(1)



(2)



(3)



(4)

wherein R^1 is independently a straight or branched alkylene group of 1 to 4 carbon atoms,

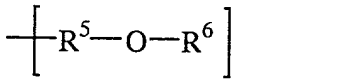
R^2 is independently hydrogen or a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 20 carbon atoms which may contain a hydroxy group, ether group, carbonyl group, ester group, lactone ring, carbonate or cyano group,

R^3 is a straight or branched alkylene group of 2 to 20 carbon atoms which may contain a hydroxy group, ether group, thioether group, carbonyl group, ester group, thioester group or carbonate,

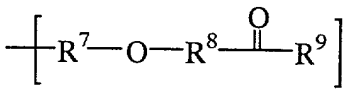
R^4 is independently a straight or branched alkylene group of 1 to 4 carbon atoms,

"a" is an integer of 1 to 3, and a+b = 3.

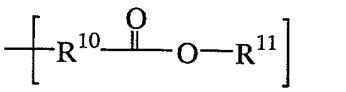
2. The amine compound of claim 1 wherein R^2 in formulae (1) and (3) has the following general formula (5), (6), (7) or (8):



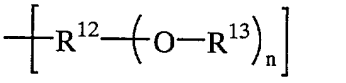
(5)



(6)



(7)



(8)

wherein R^5, R^7 and R^{10} each are a straight or branched alkylene group of 1 to 4 carbon atoms,

R^6 and R^9 each are hydrogen or a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 20 carbon atoms which may contain a hydroxy group, ether group, ester group, lactone ring or cyano group,

R^5 and R^6, taken together, may form a ring with the oxygen atom,

R^8 is a single bond or a straight or branched alkylene group of 1 to 4 carbon atoms,

R^{11} is a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 20 carbon atoms which may contain a hydroxy group, ether group, ester group or lactone ring,

R^{12} is a (n+1)-valent straight or branched organic group of 1 to 4 carbon atoms,

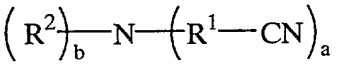
R^{13} is independently a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 10 carbon atoms which may contain an ether group, ester group, hydroxy group, lactone ring, cyano group or carbonyl group,

R^{12} and R^{13} or two R^{13} groups, taken together, may form a ring with the oxygen atom or the oxygen atom and a carbon atom in R^{12}, and

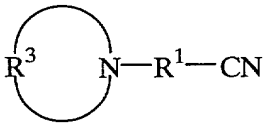
n is equal to 2, 3 or 4.

3. A resist composition comprising a basic compound having a cyano group.

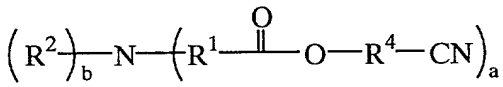
4. The resist composition of claim 3 comprising as the basic compound having a cyano group at least one of amine compounds of the following general formulae (1), (2), (3) and (4):



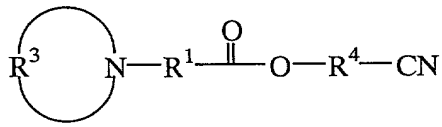
(1)



(2)



(3)



(4)

wherein R^1 is independently a straight or branched alkylene group of 1 to 4 carbon atoms,

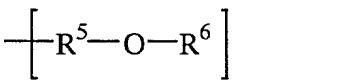
R^2 is independently hydrogen or a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 20 carbon atoms which may contain a hydroxy group, ether group, carbonyl group, ester group, lactone ring, carbonate or cyano group,

R^3 is a straight or branched alkylene group of 2 to 20 carbon atoms which may contain a hydroxy group, ether group, thioether group, carbonyl group, ester group, thioester group or carbonate,

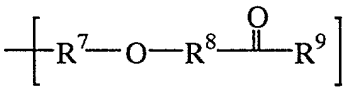
R^4 is independently a straight or branched alkylene group of 1 to 4 carbon atoms,

"a" is an integer of 1 to 3, and a+b = 3.

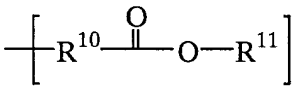
5. The resist composition of claim 4 wherein R^2 in formulae (1) and (3) has the following general formula (5), (6), (7) or (8):



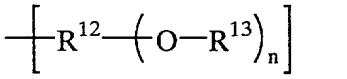
(5)



(6)



(7)



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R^{13} is independently a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 10 carbon atoms which may contain an ether group, ester group, hydroxy group, lactone ring, cyano group or carbonyl group,

R^{12} and R^{13} or two R^{13} groups, taken together, may form a ring with the oxygen atom or the oxygen atom and a carbon atom in R^{12}, and

n is equal to 2, 3 or 4.

6. A positive resist composition comprising

(A) the amine compound of claim 1,

(B) an organic solvent,

(C) a base resin having an acidic functional group protected with an acid labile group, which is normally alkali insoluble or substantially alkali insoluble, but becomes alkali soluble upon elimination of the acid labile group, and

(D) a photoacid generator.

7. The positive resist composition of claim 6 further comprising (E) a dissolution inhibitor.

8. A negative resist composition comprising

(A) the amine compound of claim 1,

(B) an organic solvent,

(C) a base resin which is normally alkali soluble, but becomes substantially alkali insoluble when crosslinked with a crosslinker,

(D) a photoacid generator, and

(F) the crosslinker capable of crosslinking under the action of acid.

9. A process for forming a resist pattern comprising the steps of:

applying the resist composition of claim 6 onto a substrate to form a coating,

heat treating the coating and then exposing it to high-energy radiation having a wavelength of less than 300 nm or electron beams through a photo mask, and

optionally heat treating the exposed coating and developing it with a developer.